

APIA, SAMOA

The islands of Samoa are as truly the heart of Polynesia as they are the geographic center of the great Polynesian Triangle. Many scholars identify Savai, the larger of the two main islands of Western Samoa, as the legendary Hawaiki, the original home of the Polynesian people who were later to conquer the wide expanse of the blue Pacific in their migrations north to Hawaii, west to Easter Island, and south to New Zealand.

Our stay in Western Samoa was in Apia, the capital, situated on the northern coast of the main island, Upolu. Once a center of intrigue, where foreign consuls plotted the annexation of the South Pacific, later a haven for trading schooners, Apia is now a peaceful but fascinatingly bustling capital of the new island state. A few modern low-rise buildings tell a story of progress, but there remain many colonial-style wide-verandah links with the



romantic and sometimes turbulent history of earlier South Sea days.

In Apia live some 25,000 of Western Samoa's population of 135,000. Although the majority of the citizens are Samoans, there are also Europeans, Chinese and peoples from other Pacific islands. While the Samoans have their own soft, musical language, almost everyone speaks English as well.